

Senate Bill 226

By: Senators Harp of the 29th, Hill of the 4th, Hudgens of the 47th, Chapman of the 3rd and Tolleson of the 20th

**AS PASSED**

**AN ACT**

To amend Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to the Department of Natural Resources, so as to provide that evaluations and reports of qualified soil scientists shall be accepted by the Department of Natural Resources for certain purposes; to define certain terms; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

**SECTION 1.**

Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to the Department of Natural Resources, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"12-2-10.

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Public practice of soil science' means any service or work, the adequate performance of which requires education in the physical, chemical, and biological sciences, as well as soil science; training and experience in the application of special knowledge of these sciences to the use and management of soils by accepted principles and methods; investigation, evaluation, and consultation in the use and management of soils; and in which the performance is related to the public welfare by safeguarding life, health, property, and the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, investigating and evaluating the interaction between water, soil, nutrients, plants, and other living organisms that are used to prepare soil scientists' reports for subsurface ground absorption systems, including infiltration galleries; land application of residuals such as sludge, septage, and other wastes; spray irrigation of waste water; soil remediation at conventional rates; land application of agricultural products and processing residues; bioremediation and volatilization; soil erodibility and sedimentation; and identification of hydric soil and redoximorphic features.

(2) 'Soil science' means the science dealing with soils as an environmental resource. Soil science includes soil characterization, classification, and mapping; the physical, chemical, hydrologic, mineralogical, biological, and microbiological analysis of soil; and the assessment, analysis, modeling, testing, evaluation, and use of soil for the benefit of mankind. Soil science does not include design or creative works, the adequate performance of which requires extensive geological, engineering, land surveying, forestry, or landscape architecture education, training, and experience or requires registration as a geologist under Chapter 19 of Title 43, professional engineer or land surveyor under Chapter 15 of Title 43, or forester under Part 2 of Article 1 of Chapter 6 of this title or licensing as a landscape architect under Chapter 23 of Title 43.

(3) 'Soil scientist' means a person who engages in the public practice of soil science.

(b) Any person who:

(1) Holds at least a bachelor's degree in science from an accredited college or university with a major in soil science or a related field of science, which degree includes a minimum of 30 semester hours or equivalent quarter credit hours in agricultural, biological, chemical, physical, or earth sciences, with a minimum of 15 semester credit hours or equivalent quarter credit hours in soil science courses; and

(2) Has at least four years of work experience as a soil scientist under the supervision of a person who meets the qualifications of paragraph (1) of this subsection and who provides satisfactory evidence of such qualifications to the department

shall be authorized and qualified, for purposes of assisting persons in meeting the requirements of this title, to engage in the public practice of soil science on behalf of such persons and submit soil science evaluations and reports to the department when such are required for purposes of satisfying requirements of this title, and such reports by a soil scientist shall be accepted by the department for such purposes.

(c) This Code section shall not be construed to prevent or affect:

(1) The practice of registered professional engineers from lawfully practicing soil mechanics, foundation engineering, and other professional engineering as provided in Chapter 15 of Title 43; or

(2) Persons registered as professional engineers or professional geologists from practicing soil science within their areas of engineering or geologic competency.

(d) It shall be unlawful for a soil scientist to engage in the design of engineering works and systems unless the soil scientist is also a registered professional engineer under Chapter 15 of Title 43."

**SECTION 2.**

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.